A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER IPC 7 H02M3/158 According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC B. FIELDS SEARCHED Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols) IPC 7 Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used) EPO-Internal, WPI Data, PAJ C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages Category ° Relevant to claim No. X US 5 963 439 A (RAVON JEAN-MICHEL ET AL) 1,2,5-105 October 1999 (1999-10-05) the whole document X US 5 889 392 A (HSU JEAN FONGYEE YAMAMOTO 1,3-10ET AL) 30 March 1999 (1999-03-30) abstract; figure 1 X US 6 271 651 B1 (STRATAKOS ANTHONY J ET 1-10 AL) 7 August 2001 (2001-08-07) column 5, line 28 - line 52; figures 1,3 Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C. Patent family members are listed in annex. Special categories of cited documents: "T" later document published after the International filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance invention "E" earlier document but published on or after the international "X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another cliation or other special reason (as specified) document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such docu-"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means ments, such combination being obvious to a person skilled document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed *&* document member of the same patent family Date of the actual completion of the international search Date of mailing of the International search report 9 February 2004 16/02/2004 Name and mailing address of the ISA Authorized officer European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL – 2280 HV Rijswijk Tel. (+31–70) 340–2040, Tx. 31 651 epo ni, Fax: (+31–70) 340–3016 Gentili, L

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